United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, in Geneva, meets with top aides to discuss situation in former Yugoslavia and recent expression of support from NATO; also meets with Advisory Board on Disarmament, "to maintain momentum of new and innovative ideas" on crisis prevention and disarmament.

+ Secretary-General deplores continued large-scale fighting in Afghanistan; calls for immediate end to violence, recalling peace agreements concluded by Afghan leaders; welcomes renewed support for sending special mission to Afghanistan when conditions permit.

+ Meeting of States parties to International Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination suspended after objections to participation of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

+ Force Commander of UNOSOM II, Lieutenant General Cevik Bir, leaving post as of 15 February; Secretary-General informs Security Council of intention to appoint Lieutenant General Aboo Samah Bin Aboo Bakar (Malaysia) to succeed him.

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In Geneva this morning, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met with Thorvald Stoltenberg, Co-Chairman of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, and with Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. They discussed the former Yugoslavia and the declaration in that regard made by the Heads of State and Government participating in the summit meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), held earlier this week in Brussels. The Secretary-General, in a statement issued yesterday, had welcomed the summit participants' expression of support for United Nations efforts to secure a negotiated settlement of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Later this morning the Secretary-General addressed an extraordinary meeting of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, which he had called in order to receive advice as the Organization explores ways to assist positive developments in arms control and disarmament. He stressed that he wanted to maintain the momentum of new and innovative ideas flowing from his two major

(more)

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reports in 1992, "An Agenda for Peace" and "New Dimensions of Arms Regulations and Disarmament in the Post-Cold War Era". There was a new awareness that preventing was better than curing international conflict, he said, and techniques of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping must all be integrated into the disarmament effort.

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Following consultations with the representatives of Iran, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia and the United States, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today deplored the continued large-scale fighting in Afghanistan and the resulting suffering of innocent civilians. He called for an immediate end to the violence, stressing that it contradicted agreements concluded by Afghan leaders and undermined regional stability.

The Secretary-General stressed the need for humanitarian assistance for the victims of the fighting which, he said, made reconstruction and rehabilitation activities almost impossible in affected areas. He recalled the recent General Assembly resolution (48/208) calling on him to dispatch a special mission to assist the peace process in Afghanistan, including the creation of a political structure acceptable to the Afghan people. Mr. Boutros-Ghali welcomed the renewed support of the Governments he had consulted for the timely dispatch of the special mission. He said it it would be sent as soon as the current fighting was brought under control and conditions would allow it to carry out its mandate effectively.

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A meeting at Headquarters of States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was suspended this morning after objections to the participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Following an opening statement by Carl-August Fleischauer, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, some representatives questioned the legality and political viability of the Federal Republic's participation, charging that the country had violated the very principles which the Convention sought to uphold.

Other representatives questioned the legality of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's automatic succession to the Convention given the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. Citing General Assembly resolution 47/1, which barred the Federal Republic from participating in its work, representatives stressed that the country's participation in the meeting would not prejudice a future decision on the matter. At the request of the representative of Pakistan, the meeting was suspended to allow for informal consultations on the issue.

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The Force Commander of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), Lieutenant General Cevik Bir, will be relinquishing his post as of 15 February. In a letter to the President of the Security Council dated 6 January, the Secretary-General announced the change and stated his intention, subject to the approval of the Council, to appoint Lieutenant General Aboo Samah Bin Aboo Bakar (Malaysia), to succeed General Bir.

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